County of San Diego

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General Plan Update
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

(1)   What is the General Plan Update?

The General Plan Update a comprehensive update of the San Diego County
General Plan, establishing future growth and land use development patterns for
the unincorporated areas of the County. The General Plan Update will replace
the current General Plan, including the land use map, the circulation map, and
regional elements.

(2)   Why update the General Plan?

The current General Plan dates back to the 1970s, and during the intervening
years much has changed within the region. The General Plan Update will
provide a general plan that more accurately reflects regional growth, resource
protection regulations, state law, local ordinances, and provide a guide for future
land use patterns based on population forecasts.

(3)   When will the General Plan Update be complete?

The General Plan Update has received a recommendation of approval from the
Planning Commission and will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for
consideration in October 2010. Approval of the General Plan Update may
require several hearings.

(4)   Where can I find information about the General Plan Update maps and the draft land use designations? Are these maps available for purchase?

Zoning counter staff can provide information about the draft General Plan Update
Land Use Designations. The General Plan Update website also contains
mapping information (click on the "Publications & Maps" link). Maps are
available for review and/or purchase at the Project Planning Support Counter at a
cost of $30 per map. You may also purchase these maps or download
Geographic Information Systems data through the SanGIS (San Diego
Geographic Information Source) website: www.sangis.org.

(5)   What affect could the General Plan Update have on my property?

Many of the current General Plan land use designation names and descriptions changed but their density may have remained unchanged. However, the General Plan Update does include some proposed modifications. If changes in the land use designation are proposed for your property, this change may also require a change in the zoning designation in order to be consistent with the new land use designation.

A summary description of the proposed land use designations is located on the General Plan Update website in the Draft Land Use Element (page 3-11), available at: http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/docs/draftgp/ch3_landuse_2010.pdf

(6)   Is there a difference between the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance?

Yes. A general plan sets forth long-term policies that guide future development. The Zoning Ordinance implements general plan policies via detailed, parcel specific development regulations for particular areas or "zones". Although the purpose and intent of zoning is different from the general plan, State law requires that zoning be consistent with maps and policies in the general plan.

(7)   Will my current zoning change after the General Plan Update is adopted? What will be my minimum parcel (lot) size in the future?

Changes to zoning that are required for consistency with the General Plan Update are included in the project. Notices were sent to property owners with changes in use regulation or increases in minimum lot size in May 2010. Proposed changes can be viewed at http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/index.html

(8)   Does the public receive notification about public hearings for the General Plan Update, or other related public meetings?

Yes. All public hearings and notices, including the Notice of Preparation for EIRs are placed in local community and regional newspapers. In addition, you can request to be added to the General Plan Update mailing list for public hearing/meeting notices via mail or e-mail. Lastly, all public meetings, workshops, and environmental documents are posted on the General Plan Update website (click on the "What's New" link). To be added to the General Plan Update mailing list, please fill out the form available on the General Plan Update website (click on the "Contact Us" link).

(9)   What land use changes were proposed for the General Plan Update? Have these changes been adopted by the Board of Supervisors?

A number of maps have been developed as possible alternatives to the land use changes for the General Plan update. Several of these maps were evaluated in the General Plan Update EIR. To view these maps online, click on the

"Publications & Maps" link on the General Plan Update website. Select "Proposed Maps" and "Land Use Alternatives

Following preparation of the EIR, a recommendation was developed by staff and refined by the Planning Commission. The resulting recommendation from the Planning Commission which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors can be viewed at http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/prop_maps.html

(10) What effect will the adoption of the General Plan Update have on a subdivision?

Privately owned land located within the unincorporated County will be subject to the requirements of the General Plan Update upon final adoption by the Board of Supervisors. The only exception is "pipelined projects" (refer to question #12), which will continue to be subject to existing regulations after adoption of the Update. Prior to the adoption of the General Plan Update, all projects will continue to be subject to the existing general plan and to other existing land use regulations.

After the General Plan Update is adopted, all subdivisions will be subject to the provisions of the new General Plan (as updated) unless a project has received Tentative Parcel Map/Tentative Map approval prior to adoption of the General Plan Update or the project is considered to be pipelined. Therefore, after the General Plan Update is adopted, in order for a Tentative Parcel Map or Tentative Map to be issued for a project that is not pipelined, the project must be consistent with the new General Plan. Adoption of the General Plan Update will not affect approval or recordation of a Final Parcel Map or Final Map.

(11) Will the County accept a subdivision map application filed in accordance with the current General Plan?

Yes. Current regulations require that subdivision maps (major or minor subdivisions) be filed in accordance with the current general plan. Applications will continue to be accepted until the General Plan Update is adopted by the Board of Supervisors. However, if the tentative map is not approved prior to approval of the General Plan Update, it will be subject to the new General Plan. Therefore, there is risk associated with the processing of any map at this time, and especially if that map does not comply with the General Plan Update land use maps. *Note*: This does not apply to subdivision projects that have received "pipeline" project status (refer to question #12).

DPLU will not accept subdivision map applications based on the Board Endorsed Land Use Maps or any alternatives until the final General Plan Update map is adopted.

(12) What is a "pipeline project"?

On August 6, 2003, the Board of Supervisors approved a "Pipeline Policy" (available at the Zoning Counter and the General Plan Update website). The Pipeline Policy permits subdivision projects whose applications were deemed complete on or before August 6, 2003 to have pipelined status. Only projects with pipelined status will be reviewed against *existing land use regulations* after adoption of the General Plan Update. After the General Plan Update is adopted, subdivision maps that were not in the pipeline will be subject to the General Plan Update. Please see the Pipelining Policy Fact Sheet at:
http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/docs/pc_feb10_fs01_pipe.pdf

(13) How can I obtain additional information about the subdivision process under the existing General Plan?

If you have general questions (not project specific) about the subdivision process visit or call the Zoning Counter at (858) 565-5981, or Toll Free at (888) 267-8770. If you need project level assistance on a proposed subdivision project that has not yet been submitted, you can schedule an optional Minor Pre-application meeting for a minor subdivision. Major subdivisions require a mandatory Pre-application meeting with County staff prior to submittal of a formal application. Pre-Application Meeting Request Forms and directions are available at the Zoning Counter and the DPLU website:
www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/ZC033.pdf.

Information about the regulatory permit processing guidelines and related statues is located on the DPLU website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu (click on the "Process Guidance Index" link under Permit Process Guidance / Regulations).

(14) What happens if my lot does not meet the minimum density recommended on the General Plan Update maps and I want to build a house?

An existing legal lot does not need to meet General Plan density requirements in order to obtain a building permit. However, lot size requirements are just one factor in lot development. Additional requirements, such as sewage disposal, site constraints, access, emergency service availability, building and environmental approvals may limit your ability to develop your lot.

(15) How can I obtain other information about the General Plan Update not previously addressed?

If you are unable to find the information you want on the General Plan Update website, call the General Plan Update hotline at (619) 615-8289 or e-mail gpupdate.DPLU@sdcounty.ca.gov. Please include your name and phone number (or e-mail address). Parcel specific information will require that you provide your current Tax Assessor's Parcel Number(s) which can be found on your property tax bill, or by contacting the Tax Assessor at (619) 236-3771.

Contact Information:

DPLU Main Office: 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B, San Diego, CA 92123

Zoning Counter: (858) 565-5981, or Toll Free at (888) 267-8770

DPLU Website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu

GPUpdate Website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu (click on the "General Plan Update" link), or www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/index.html

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